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A GREEK INSCRIPTION FROM THE HAURAN

THE inscription here published (Fig. 1) was found in the summer of 1904 by Azeez Khyat, a New York dealer in antiquities, who has kindly supplied the photograph for this



FIGURE 1. — GREEK INSCRIPTION FROM THE HAURAN.

publication. He has since sold the stone to the museum at Pittsfield, Mass. Workmen in the employ of Mr. Khyat were searching for tombs near the town of Irbid, when they uncovered this slab not far below the surface of the ground.

It is of light-colored limestone, about $66 \times 56 \times 8.5$ centimetres in size, and, as can be seen from the photograph, is in an excellent state of preservation. On the back and edges it had been roughly worked; the face was brought to a comparatively smooth surface and then "tooled." This has left small striations, running interruptedly from the upper right-hand to the lower left-hand corner. Guide lines were scratched about 4.3 centimetres apart, and between these the letters, averaging three centimetres high, are carved with considerable regularity, though not *στοιχηδόν*.

Beginning with the word *καὶ* in the seventh line, the second half of the seventh and the whole of the eighth line show plain traces of erasure and re-lettering. The surface of the slab is here slightly hollowed out, and fragments of the former writing are to be seen at several points; among others, in the spaces left vacant above the garland. In the ninth line the striations have been smoothed away from part of the surface, but apparently the lettering was not changed. The second writing is not so well done as the first; this may be due in part to the inferior surface on which it was engraved.

The inscription reads as follows:

Ἀγαθὴ Τύχη

- 1 Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Αὐτο-
- 2 κράτορος Μάρκου Ἀντωνίου Γορδιανοῦ Σεβ(αστοῦ),
- 3 ἐπὶ Δομιτίου Οὐαλεριανοῦ τοῦ λαμ(προτάτου) ὑπατι-
- 4 κοῦ, ἐφεστῶτος Καλ(πορνίου) Σατορνεῖνου χειλιάρχου,
- 5 προεδρείας Θεοδώρου Βάσσου, ἐπισκοπευνόν-
- 6 των Αὐρρ. Σαβεῖνου Νεαγίου καὶ Σαβεῖνου Βάσ-
- 7 σου τῶν βουλευτῶν, καὶ Ζηνοδώρου Ἀπολ(λ)ινα-
- 8 ρίου συνβ(ουλεύοντος), διαταγῇ(ι) Φλ(αουίου) Οὐήρου,
- ἐκ δημοσίου.
- 9 πῆχ(εις) ρλ' · ἔτ(ει) ρλγ'

Irbid in the Hauran, about twenty miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee, is usually identified with the Arbela mentioned

by Eusebius and Jerome.¹ But I am not aware that there is any inscriptional evidence to support the identification, and on this account it is the more to be regretted that the part of this inscription, where the name of the town probably appeared, has been rewritten. The mention of *βουλευταί* and other officials shows that it was a *πόλις* which erected the slab, while the "fine Roman ruins" mentioned by Merrill² and other travellers in the vicinity of Irbid testify to the importance of the city which once occupied the site.

If the name of the emperor is here given in full, the inscription dates from the latter part of the year 238 or the beginning of 239 A.D. Two emperors with the name M. Antonius Gordianus Sempronianus enjoyed a brief reign in the early part of the year 238. M. Antonius Gordianus, the third of the name, received the tribunicial power in the summer of the same year,³ and some time must be supposed to have elapsed before the news of his accession reached the remote province of Arabia. The "year 133" is evidently reckoned from the Era of Bostra (*ἔτος κατὰ Βόστρα*) often used in the cities of this region.⁴ There has been some doubt whether this era began with the year 105 A.D., as the chronicle states, or 106 as many inscriptions seem to indicate.⁵ Waddington has argued strongly for the latter date, and this inscription would seem to accord with his view.⁶ The Arabian year began with March 22nd, and the 133rd year, reckoning from 106, would extend from the spring of 238 to the spring of 239. Had the reckoning begun with 105 A.D., the 133rd year would have come before Gordianus III began to reign.

Domitius Valerianus, the "Proconsul," is already known

¹ Pauli-Wissowa, *s.v.* Arbela.

² Selah Merrill: *East of the Jordan*, p. 293. A good bibliography of this region will be found in R. E. Brünnow's *Die Provincia Arabia*, Strassburg, 1904.

³ G. Goyau, *Chron. de l'Emp. Rom.*, p. 285. The exact month is given variously, from June to August.

⁴ Chronicon Paschale, I. 472. 8 (at the year 105): *Πετραῖοι καὶ Βοστρηνοὶ ἐντεῦθεν τοὺς ἑαυτῶν χρόνους ἀριθμοῦσιν.*

⁵ See the discussion, with references, by Kubitschek, Pauli-Wissowa, I, p. 642.

⁶ Le Bas and Waddington, p. 562.

from another inscription of this province.¹ It is probably he whose name appears on the base of a statue found at Hieropolis in Cilicia,² of which province he was *legatus pro prætore*, apparently before he was sent to govern Arabia. The prænomen Marcus appears in a fragmentary inscription from Bostra (*C.I.G.* 4644), and Domaszewski has already suggested that the lacuna ΕΠΙ ΜΑΡΚ . . . | . . . ΠΡΕΣΒ ΣΕΒ ΑΝΤΙCΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΥ should be filled in with the name of Domitius.

His name does not seem to occur in the consular Fasti, and *ὑπατικός*, *consularis*, given to him in this Arbēlan inscription, may be a mere compliment; for the Greek-speaking cities were apt to be less accurate in such details than the Roman officials. It is, of course, possible that Domitius had been granted the *ornamenta consularia*, or had been raised to the rank by *adlectio*. But it is still more likely that we have here an early example of that usage by which the title of *consularis* was bestowed upon the governor of a province as such, without strict regard to his rank in the senatorial order.³

The phraseology of this inscription for the most part follows well-established lines, and can be paralleled from many other inscriptions of the same region and period. But the part which was rewritten as described above presents some difficulties. Who was Zenodorus Apollinarius, and what is the meaning of the letters CYNB which follow his name? I am unable to refer to an analogous phrase in another inscription, and can only hazard the following explanation: The inscription may have originally contained in this place the name of the city which erected it and a statement of the work which it commemorates; or possibly there was the name of a divinity in whose honor the work had been completed. At some later date repairs

¹ Cf. *C.I.L.* III, 14139³¹, IMP CAES | M ANTONIO | GORDIANO | PIO FEL AVG | PER DOM | VALERIANVM | LEG EIVS PR PR | LIX. On a milestone 59 miles north of Petra.

² *J.H.S.* XI, p. 246. If he was (as here suggested) the Valerianus named by Liebenam (*Forsch.*, p. 108) as legate of Galatia about 197 A.D., his official career was certainly a long one.

³ Pauli-Wissowa, *s.v.* Consularis.

may have been necessary, and we may suppose these were carried out by Apollinarius on the order of Flavius Verus (if that be the correct reading of his name¹). No new inscription was set up, but part of the old was erased and these two names were added. Apollinarius is termed "adviser," *συμβουλευών*, of those who had originally superintended the construction of the work. But it is not easy to find a parallel for this use of the word. Nor does *διαταγή* seem to be a common word in inscriptions; *ἐκ διαταγῆς* *C.I.G.* I, 3465, may be called a fair equivalent. It is to be hoped that the inscriptions gathered by the Princeton expeditions to this region may afford some parallel phrases.

Finally, if *πήχεις* is the correct reading in the last line, it seems reasonable to infer that the inscription is not simply honorary (as the garland might suggest), but commemorates the completion of some material work, the building of a wall or a road. This is the conclusion arrived at by M. Clermont-Ganneau, whose confirmation of my somewhat doubtful reading I am glad to quote in full:

G. M. WHICHER.

PARIS, 9.9.05.

Cher Monsieur, l'inscription sur laquelle vous voulez bien me consulter est fort intéressante. La fin ne laisse pas d'être embarrassante. On attendrait régulièrement un verbe; mais il me paraît impossible d'en tirer un du groupe énigmatique ΠΗΧΡΑ considéré comme formé de sigles abrégatives. Tout bien pesé, je serais tenté de lire: *πήχ(εις)ρλ'*, ἔτ (ους) *ρλγ'*, c'est à dire: "130 coudées; l'an 133." Il s'agirait alors d'une certaine longueur de *mur* — enceinte de ville ou péribole de hiéron — construite aux frais du trésor public. Nous avons des exemples de constructions de ce genre faites partiellement aux frais de tel ou

¹ Φλ(αβλου) <Σε>ονήρου is suggested by Professor Sterrett, and the remnants of *curved* letters over the garland would seem to indicate that the letters CE once stood there. But there is obviously room for more than two letters in this space. Moreover, this name belongs to the *second* writing, and there is no apparent reason why it should have been left incomplete. For this reason I consider it more probable that we have the full name here, and that the gap in the line was left intentionally by those who rewrote this part. See *infra*.

tel, avec l'indication numérique des longueurs construites; un des exemples les plus remarquables en Syrie nous est fourni par les inscriptions du sanctuaire de Cheikh Barakat (cf. mes *Études d'Archéol. Orient.* t. II, pp. 35-54). Le tour laconique du texte, avec le verbe sous-entendu, pourrait s'expliquer par l'influence toute romaine qui s'y manifeste (par exemple, l'abréviation AYPP = *Ἀρχηλαίων*) ; l'équivalent latin de ce passage serait alors quelque chose comme : P·P·PED. . . . , c'est à dire : *p(ecunia) p(ublica) ped(es)* . . . ; *anno CXXXIII*. Il est à supposer que le mur dans lequel cette pierre était encastrée devait contenir d'autres inscriptions du même genre¹ indiquant des longueurs de construction exécutées aux frais d'autres personnes ou groupes de personnes. Il serait très important de connaître exactement et d'examiner la localité d'où provient le monument : l'étude des ruines permettrait peut-être de déterminer la nature de la construction dont il s'agit ; étant donnée la longueur relativement considérable dont il est question ici, il est à supposer que l'enceinte devait être celle d'une ville, ou mieux le péribole d'un temple.

Bien sincèrement vôtre

CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

¹ Réparties de place en place.